

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SAIGON 08245 101401 Z

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1475

INFO USDEL JEC PARIS

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL CAN THO

AMCONSUL DANANG

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 8245

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT VS

SUBJECT: TRAN VAN TUYEN COMMENTS ON CLOSING OF TIN NGHIA BANK
AND ARREST OF NGUYEN TAN DOI

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

1. SUMMARY. LAWYER AND LOWER HOUSE DEPUTY TRAN VAN TUYEN TOLD EMBASSY OFFICERS MAY 9 THAT THE GVN CLOSED DEPUTY NGUYEN TAN DOI'S TIN NGHIA BANK PRIMARILY FOR BANKING MALPRACTICES, RATHER THAN FOR POLITICAL REASONS AS SOMETIMES ALLEGED. TUYEN, ONE OF DOI'S DEFENSE ATTORNEYS, SAID THAT HIS CLIENT IS GUILTY. DOI AND SEVERAL OF HIS TIN NGHIA COLLEAGUES WERE IMPRISONED MAY 8, CAUSING TUYEN, AN OPPOSITIONIST, SOME QUALMS OVER IMPLICATIONS OF THE WAY THE COURT STRIPPED DOI OF HIS PARLIAMENTARY IMMUNITY AGAINST ARREST. END SUMMARY.

2. LAWYER AND OPPOSITIONIST LOWER HOUSE DEPUTY TRAN VAN TUYEN TOLD EMBASSY OFFICERS MAY 9 THAT THE GVN CLOSED DEPUTY NGUYEN TAN DOI'S TIN NGHIA BANK APRIL 21 BECAUSE OF DOI'S LARGE- SCALE, ILLEGAL MANIPULATIONS OF THE BANK'S FUNDS. TUYEN LARGELY DISCOUNTED
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PAGE 02 SAIGON 08245 101401 Z

SAIGON RUMORS THAT DOI FELL BECAUSE OF POLITICAL MISCALCULATIONS HE MADE, ALTHOUGH TUYEN DID SAY THAT DOI HAD AMBITIONS TO BE SVN PRESIDENT SOMEDAY AND HAD SOUTHT TO BUY POLITICAL INSURANCE BY MAINTAINING CONTACTS WITH THE NLF AND PARIS " THIRD FORCE" EXILES SUCH AS GEN. NGUYEN VAN HINH AS WELL AS WITH ADMINISTRATION CIRCLES.

3. DOI, WHO WAS QUESTIONED AT LENGTH FOLLOWING THE CLOSING OF THE BANK, WAS ORDERED JAILED MAY 8 BY THE SAIGON COURT OF FIRST INSTANCE, ALONG WITH SEVERAL OF HIS CLOSEST COLLABORATORS INCLUDING NGUYEN ANH TUAN (VICE MINISTER OF FINANCE 1969-71) AND NGUYEN BA NHAN (FORMER CHIEF OF THE CENTRAL LOGISTICS AGENCY). PHOTOS OF THE ONE- TIME " PIASTER BILLIONAIRE" BEING DRIVEN TO PRISON HAVE BEEN FRONTPAGED IN MOST SAIGON DAILIES.

4. ACCORDING TO TUYEN, WHO IS ONE OF DOI' S DEFENSE ATTORNEYS, DOI IS ALMOST CERTAINLY GUILTY OF MULTIPLE VIOLATIONS OF BANKING REGULATIONS. HOWEVER, TUYEN OBJECTED TO THE JAILING OF DEPUTY DOI BY THE COURT ON THE GROUNDS THAT HE HAS BEEN APPREHENDED FLAGRANTE DELICTO AND WAS, THEREFORE, NOT ENTITLED TO PARLIAMENTARY IMMUNITY FROM ARREST. TUYEN TERMED THIS AN " ELASTIC" INTERPRETATION OF THE LAW AND EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT THE THIEU ADMINISTRATION MIGHT IN THE FUTURE JAIL NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OPPOSITIONISTS BY CLAIMING TO HAVE CAUGHT THEM FLAGRANTE DELICTO REGARDLESS OF ACTUAL CIRCUMSTANCES. ACCORDING TO AN ARTICLE IN OPPOSITIONIST DAI DAN TOC NEWSPAPER MAY 10, A NUMBER OF DEPUTIES ARE PLANNING TO BRING UP THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF DOI' S ARREST FOR DEBATE IN THE LOWER HOUSE.

5. TUYEN CLAIMED THAT THE GVN INVESTIGATION OF THE TIN NGHIA BANK IS A SENSITIVE ISSUE FOR MANY CORRUPT PERSONALITIES OF HIGH STATION WHO HAD PLACED LARGE SUMS OF MONEY IN NUMBERED ACCOUNTS AT THE BANK. HE ASSERTED THAT A MEMBER OF THE PROSECUTOR' S OFFICE HAD TOLD HIM THAT A BOOK CONTAINING THE IDENTITIES OF THE ANONYMOUS ACCOUNT HOLDERS HAD BEEN TAKEN AWAY TO INDEPENDENCE PALACE SHORTLY AFTER ITS DISCOVERY AT THE BANK' S HEADQUARTERS. DEPUTY TUYEN HAS IMPLIED THAT THE FACT TIN NGHIA' S DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL, LTG (RET.) NGUYEN HUU CO, HAS NOT BEEN ARRESTED MAY BE A RESULT OF CO' S FRIENDSHIP WITH PRESIDENT THIEU AND OTHER PROMINENT ARVN GENERALS.
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